

Agency Information

AGENCY : HSCA
RECORD NUMBER : 180-10144-10018

RECORD SERIES : CIA SEGREGATED COLLECTION

AGENCY FILE NUMBER : 29-42-04

Document Information

ORIGINATOR : HSCA
FROM : CIA
TO :

TITLE :

DATE : 08/08/1978
PAGES : 5

SUBJECTS :

CIA, METHODOLOGY
SOVIET EMBASSY IN MEXICO CITY
PHOTOGRAPHS AND FILMS
OSWALD, LEE, POST-RUSSIAN PERIOD, TRAVEL, TRIP TO
MEXICO

DOCUMENT TYPE : NOTES
CLASSIFICATION : Unclassified
RESTRICTIONS : 1A; 1B
CURRENT STATUS : Redact
DATE OF LAST REVIEW : 01/01/2003

OPENING CRITERIA :

COMMENTS : Box 21

Released under the John
F. Kennedy
Assassination Records
Collection Act of 1992
(44 USC 2107 Note).
Case#:NW 53080 Date:
06-05-2017

Rewrite
Denny

8/8/78

On August 8, 1978 House Select Committee on Assassinations staffers Edwin Juan Lopez and Harold Leag interviewed Ramon Alvarez Durant at 10:53 a.m. at the Hotel Del Angel. ~~(Room 810)~~

The Central Intelligence Agency ^{insisting} to protect their employees did not wish ^{that} the above mentioned staffers speak to Durant in prison. Thus three separate rooms were reserved - 808, 809 + 810 - Mr. Durant was in room 809. House Select Committee staffers were in room 810 and two CIA personnel introduced as Steve and Bruce ^{were in} ~~monitored~~ room 808. In room 810 a tape recorder was set up along with a small mixing board, a microphone and a speaker. The CIA explained to Committee staffers that Mr. Durant would have a pair of headphones from which he would listen to our questions. He would have a microphone to answer our questions and ^{ASCA staffers} ~~we~~ would ~~both~~ hear the answer through the loudspeaker.

Ramon Alvarez Durant is a Mexican citizen who was born December 7, 1933. He began to work with the agency in April 1955 doing electronic surveillance from radio cars. From 1957 to 1969 he was the ^{Soviet Embassy} photographic surveillance supervisor. Basically, he said that he was a "runner". He would courier film to each of the three bases, pick up film from the three bases and

courier them to the person who processed them -
in 1963 it was Dr. Carlos Gutierrez his brother
in law - and then courier 3'x5' prints from
his brother in law to his case officer.

Mr. Durant said that in 1963 there were three
manned photo bases covering the Soviet Embassy. He¹
could not recall the names² of the bases but stated that
there was one across the street from the Embassy
approximately at the second floor. He¹ stated that there was
another base a couple of houses down at a higher
angle. In this way if there was much traffic the base
with the higher angle would get a photo. The third
base covered the backyard. The people who manned the
bases worked out of their own apartments. They all
were led to believe that theirs was the only base because
it improved efficiency.

Mr. Durant stated that he was "quite certain" that
the stations were manned Mondays through Saturdays
from 10-6. Mr. Durant stated that the cameras
would hardly ever break down. He said that they
worked with Exakta + Balascope cameras. Durant stated
that he delivered the film in bulk to the bases
then picked them up approximately 3 times a
week. He did not remember whether his case officer
in 1963 was Puckett or Keenan.

Mr. Durant's attention was then turned to 1963, when Oswald allegedly visited the Soviet Embassies and was asked to explain the procedure at that time. Mr. Durant stated that there were yet 3 bases operating. Each base was ^{really} instructed to photograph any foreigners that visited the Soviet Embassy. They were also instructed to keep a log sheet. The log sheet contained the name / base, dates covered. On the left side would be found a number then a time then a brief description.

ex: 1 10:53 Short ^{yo...} spic & white-haired man

The sheets and the film would be picked up by Durant two or three times a week. He would turn them over to ^{his brother} Durant in law who would make 3'x5' prints + sometimes also contact prints. [Durant thinks that they turned completely to contact prints ^{later than 63} ~~around 64~~] Durant would then turn the prints over to Puckett or Keenan and would never see them again. He stated that in 1963 ^{at} each base would normally average 50-60 pictures. Durant stated that it was easy to keep a tag on their efficiency because ^{there were two bases photographing} ~~if one of the bases was~~ ^{the same entrance} ~~the entrance got changed~~ and the other got ~~only~~ ² ~~g. knew something was wrong~~. Durant stated that he was ~~95%~~ ^{90-95%} sure that ^{Soviet} all foreigners who visited the Embassy ^{even} ~~once~~ were photographed.

When we turned Mr. Durant's attention to a photo of Oswald he stated that he was always under the impression that they had gotten a photo of him. He stated that he never saw a photo of Oswald but that he never ^{the photo surveillance; the couriered.} really studied them. He further stated that after J.F.K.'s assassination & subsequent publication of J.F.K. photos he never got a chance to review the photo production & logs. In fact he stated that the only times he got to study a picture was when his case officer would ^{request that} he ask his underlings at the bases to look out for a certain individual & gave him copies of all blowups were done by the agency.

Mr. Durant stated "they would unquestionably get a photo of a foreigner who came to the Embassy on a few occasions. Mr. Durant stated that it was his recollection that all the cameras were working around that time. He said that it bothered him that no photo had come up but that he never inquired because he did not have a need to know. He stated that no one ever congratulated him for getting a picture of Oswald and that no one ever asked him why he had not. This was one ^{of the} reasons that made him think that a picture of Oswald had been gotten.

Mr. Durant stated that he does not know if the agency got a picture or not or whether they had given a picture to the Warren Commission that was alleged to be Oswald.

Before the interview Mr. Durant was asked if he understood the secrecy letter and he answered affirmatively. When asked whether he had been briefed by any CIA personnel he stated no, that he was only told that the HSCA wanted to speak to him. When asked if the CIA had told him to fully cooperate he stated yes.

The interview ^{was} concluded at 11:32

Tell Chuck we talked to Panny Flores.

~~Not picked up~~ ~~Group~~ ~~for~~ ~~for~~ ~~for~~

~~one more~~

one more

Ammy

C.O.

but we had no notes
or files to show.

Pappy T I didn't know